

Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 PRETOR 04750 161419Z

ACTION SS-25

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INFO AMEMBASSY LUSAKA IMMEDIATE
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AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM IMMEDIATE

S E C R E T PRETORIA 4750

EXDIS

FROM LOW

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PDIV, PINT, RH
SUBJECT: RHODESIA: MEETING WITH SITHOLE

1. GRAHAM AND I HAD ASKED TO SEE SITHOLE LAST WEEK. THE MEETING WAS ORIGINALLY SET UP FOR MONDAY BUT WHEN HE FAILED TO RETURN FROM LONDON, IT WAS RESCHEDULED FOR TUESDAY AFTERNOON, AUGUST 15. SITHOLE RECEIVED US ALONE.

2. GRAHAM SAID HE HAD RECEIVED A BRIEF REPORT FROM OWEN OF THEIR MEETING. WE TOOK IT THAT HE SAW SOME MERIT IN AN ALL-PARTIES MEETING PROVIDED THAT SOME PROGRESS COULD BE MADE. THIS DEPENDED ON SMITH'S WILLINGNESS TO MOVE SIGNIFICANTLY BEYOND THE MARCH 3RD AGREEMENT. WE FULLY AGREED WITH HIS ASSESSMENT AND COULD ASSURE HIM THAT WE HAD BEEN SAYING THE SAME TO SMITH. OUR INTEREST WAS IN ACHIEVING A SETTLEMENT WHICH BROUGHT THE "SUBSTANCE OF INDEPENDENCE" WITHOUT HUMILIATING OR DISHONORING ANYONE. SITHOLE WAS PLEASED WITH GRAHAM'S FORMULATION OF THE "SUBSTANCE OF INDEPENDENCE" WHICH HE REPEATED A NUMBER

SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 02 PRETOR 04750 161419Z

OF TIMES DURING THE CONVERSATION, GIVING IT HIS FULL AGREEMENT. WE OUTLINED THE FOUR AREAS OF DISCUSSION CONTAINED IN OUR NON-PAPER TO SMITH, EXPRESSING THE VIEW THAT WE FELT PROGRESS WAS NEEDED IN EACH OF THESE AREAS, AND DISCUSSING IN SOME DETAIL THE PROBLEMS OF EACH. SITHOLE LISTENED CAREFULLY AND DID NOT DISAGREE

WITH ANY OF THE POINTS WE MADE, THOUGH HE OBVIOUSLY DID NOT ACCEPT OUR VIEW THAT SOMETHING LIKE PARITY ON THE GOVERNING COUNCIL WOULD PROBABLY BE NECESSARY. HE ASKED IF THAT MEANT THAT THE SALISBURY GROUP AND THE PF WERE EQUAL. WE RESPONDED ONLY THAT THERE MUST BE A MANIFESTLY IMPARTIAL CHARACTER TO THE INTERIM GOVERNMENT.

3. SITHOLE SAID HIS FEAR WAS THAT HAVING WITH GREAT DIFFICULTY SIGNED SMITH UP TO A COMMITMENT FOR MAJORITY RULE ON THE BASIS OF ONE MAN ONE VOTE AND INDEPENDENCE BY DECEMBER 31, HE WOULD NOW USE THE FAILURE OF AN ALL-PARTIES MEETING TO GET OUT OF THAT COMMITMENT. WE EXPLAINED THAT AS WE SAW IT GOING TO AN ALL-PARTIES MEETING DID NOT MEAN ABANDONING THE MARCH 3RD AGREEMENT AND WE BELIEVED THAT SMITH HIMSELF AGREED WITH THIS AND HAD NO INTENTION OF DOING SO. HOWEVER, THAT WAS A MATTER FOR SITHOLE TO CLARIFY WITH SMITH.

4. SITHOLE ASKED WHETHER WE DISCUSSED THE MATTER OF A UN FORCE WITH SMITH. WE SAID WE HAD ALTHOUGH NOT IN DETAIL. WE DID NOT THINK THIS WAS A MAKE OR BREAK ISSUE. THE WORSE ONE COULD SAY OF THE UN WAS THAT IT MIGHT NOT BE AS EFFECTIVE AS ONE WOULD HOPE, AND WE REVIEWED WITH HIM THE PROCEDURE BY WHICH THE SECRETARY GENERAL WOULD CONSULT WITH ALL PARTIES BEFORE SELECTING PARTICIPANTS IN ANY FORCE.

SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 03 PRETOR 04750 161419Z

5. WE ASKED SITHOLE ABOUT POSSIBLE LOCATIONS FOR CONFERENCE, MENTIONING THE VARIOUS PLACES WHICH WE HAD CONSIDERED AND FOR ONE REASON OR ANOTHER HAD TO BE DROPPED. WE THEN MENTIONED LUANGWA IN ZAMBIA. HE LEFT NO DOUBT THAT SUCH A VENUE WAS ABSOLUTELY OUT OF THE QUESTION. HE SAID HE HAD NOTHING PERSONALLY AGAINST KAUNDA BUT THE ZAMBIAN PRESIDENT'S ACTIONS IN THE LAST TWO MONTHS AGAINST THE INTERNAL SETTLEMENT LEFT HIM WITH NO CHOICE BUT TO REFUSE TO GO THERE. HE WAS APPARENTLY PARTICULARLY INCENSED BY KAUNDA'S ACTION AT THE RECENT OAU SUMMIT IN KHARTOUM WHERE THE ZAMBIAN PRESIDENT APPARENTLY THREATENED TO LEAVE IF SITHOLE WAS ALLOWED TO ATTEND. SITHOLE SAID HE WOULD RULE OUT ATTENDING A MEETING IN ANY FRONT LINE COUNTRY. HE HAD NO OBJECTION TO OUR SUGGESTION OF SWAZILAND, KENYA, MAURITIUS, OR ASCENSION, BUT PERSONALLY EXPRESSED HIS PREFERENCE FOR LONDON.

6. COMMENT: THIS WAS A VERY DIFFERENT SITHOLE FROM THE ONE WE MET WITH LAST. HE WAS QUIET, LOGICAL, REASONABLE, THOUGH HE DID NOT COMMIT HIMSELF TO ATTEND A MEETING. I NEVERTHELESS BELIEVE HE WOULD DO SO ONCE SMITH DECIDES TO PUT ON THE PRESSURE. HOWEVER, I AM NOW CONVINCED THAT

BOTH SITHOLE AND MUZOREWA WOULD MAKE A CONDITION OF
THEIR ATTENDANCE AT A MEETING THAT IT NOT BE HELD IN
ZAMBIA OR ANOTHER FRONT LINE COUNTRY.

EDMONDSON

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NNN

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